Ernie Fletcher Governor

LaJuana S. Wilcher Secretary Environmental and Public Protection Cabinet



## **Environmental Quality Commission**

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**Environmental Quality Commission** 

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November 4, 2004

LaJuana S. Wilcher, Secretary Environmental and Public Protection Cabinet Capitol Plaza Tower, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor Frankfort, KY 40601

Dear Secretary Wilcher:

The Kentucky Environmental Quality Commission recommended unanimously at its October 13, 2004 public meeting at Shelby Elementary School in Louisville to commend your efforts to convene an Air Toxics Task Force to address the extent of elevated levels of toxic air pollutants in Kentucky's industrialized areas and population centers.

Kentucky has made much progress in reducing air pollution. However, air toxics continue to pose serious environmental and public health threats. The effect of toxic air pollutants is especially a concern to the health of our children. Numerous studies have linked environment toxins to cancer, birth defects and even behavioral disorders. The recently released EQC report on *Children's Environmental Health in Kentucky* notes that pound for pound, kids breathe more than do adults and are more exposed and more vulnerable to air toxics in the environment. The report reveals that Kentucky has among some of the highest asthma and birth defect rates in the nation. In addition, EQC found that the incidence of many childhood cancers including Brain/Central Nervous System and Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma in Kentucky are above the 5-year national average.

While Kentucky has made much progress in reducing criteria pollutants emitted by industrial sources, more must be done to reduce toxic emissions. The EQC *Children's Environmental Health in Kentucky* report noted that about 5 percent of the 60 million pounds of industrial toxic chemicals released in Kentucky to the air in 2002 were listed as OSHA carcinogens.

The U.S. EPA, state government and local air pollution control programs share responsibility for controlling air toxics. Louisville recently proposed air toxics standards that have been praised by the U.S. EPA Region IV as "placing Louisville in the forefront of communities that are addressing air-toxics issues." EQC is hopeful that the newly created Air Toxics Task Force will be able to more fully assess the extent of air toxics in all of our Kentucky communities and the risks posed by these chemicals

EQC would like to offer you our full support as the task force moves forward to address the very real threats posed by toxic air pollutants. Please feel free to call upon us if we can be of any assistance.

Sincerely,

Lindell Ormsbee, Chair

**Environmental Quality Commission** 

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Cc: Governor Ernie Fletcher